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Updated Wednesday 21 January 2004

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Mug Shot Stamps From Australia Post!

By Glen Stephens

In a world first, Australia Post this month offered to print your photograph in colour on a postally valid, officially issued stamp. And don't forget, you read it here first in *Australasian STAMPS* Magazine!

The leading edge technology debuted March 19th at the massive "Australia 99" World Stamp Expo in Melbourne Australia. A very large crowd attended what was possibly the large attendance show worldwide in 1999. (See last magazine for complete details.)

Collectors and dealers were able to buy blocks of 10 domestic letter rate 45¢ "Polly Woodside" ship thematics issued specially for the exhibition, printed with their photo alongside. The regular issue 45¢ "Polly Woodside" stamps have an unusual perforated, gummed, vertical "tab" to the side of the design, one half the regular stamp size, each bearing the "Australia 99" Koala Bear logo.

Special sheetlets 10 of these stamp were printed with this fully perforated design tab totally blank, alongside the 45¢ ship stamp. A secret trial campaign spanning several months allowed full colour photo images of a person or persons to be rapidly printed upon this blank "stamplike" tab.

YOUR FACE ON A STAMP



In a world first, Australia Post allowed you to create postally valid stamps with your own photo on them!

The most remarkable part of the issue is that Australia Post waived the usual rule that only official standard design postage stamps are postally valid in Australia. For example, a normal non-postal coloured label, charity seal, or stamplike "cinderella" will not be deliberately be hand cancelled by Australia Post staff, this being against regulations.

These "personalized" tabs were decreed to be 100% postally valid whilst still attached to the 45¢ "Polly Woodside" stamps, and were thus eligible to be hand postmarked with any official postmark, or even passed through the regular mails, where a machine postmark is normally applied. Postally used examples dated March would be very nice items to seek out, and will one day be worth good money if kept on cover.

Readers who obtained a sheet or sheets can use them on Registered, Insured or even overseas mail as single units, or in multiples of any size up to 10 units. (\$A4.50). Think how great they would be to send out your Christmas cards! Note that the photo labels must at all times remain affixed to the 45¢ stamp to be postally valid.

The personalized "real photo" stamps could of course have been affixed on March 19 to Post Office First Day Covers and

cancelled quite legally at the show, making them one of the most amazing FDC's in any reader's album. It adds new meaning to that quaint American term "socked on the nose" cancels!

David Maiden, National manager of Australia Post Philatelic Division told me today: "we are very excited to have pioneered a totally different type of stamp onto the world market".

Maiden continued: "Australia 99" was the largest stamp exhibition ever held in the southern hemisphere, and it is expected to be the largest philatelic event worldwide during 1999. We really wanted to offer something special to show our leading edge technology to the world."

I asked David whether he can envisage these items being offered by mail order in the months after "Australia 99". Perhaps produced by collectors posting in colour photographs for scanning. He replied: "we have no firm position on that right now. We will see what kind of response we get in the ensuing months after the "Australia 99" debut, and take that as a pointer to whether we proceed any further with this novel concept. I will keep collectors advised on our position. We seek the views of your readers as to whether they want to buy this type of product."

HOW WAS IT DONE?

For the technically minded, here is how state-of-the-art modern technology made these unique stamp items possible. The cost of the trials and software, and special stamp print runs must have ran way into a 6 figure sum. I think Australia Post are to be congratulated on beating the Americans and Europeans and better still, the Japanese to this end product.

Collectors stood in front of one of several expensive digital cameras on site at "Australia 99". Their personalized image or "photograph" was captured using an expensive Agfa digital camera. This digital image was then processed through customized software using a new range of iMacs supplied by Design Wyse.

After graphic manipulation, the image was printed digitally in sharp full colour by a Fuji Xerox Docucolor model 40/40. The image was printed upon the conventionally pre-printed and perforated gummed stamps, thus giving the recipient a block of valid postage stamps bearing their own likeness.

Extensive trials of this exciting process were conducted over recent months by the Australia Post owned Sprintpak, and Excel Digital, a design reproduction company located in Melbourne Australia.

Michael Laurence, publisher of **Linn's Stamp News** said in his editorial March 1, that 15 years ago he felt the computer was a threat to our hobby, but now felt it was leading us into a golden age. He also said "we live in exciting times" and this new innovation certainly bears this comment out! I posted Michael a few examples for his files.

WHAT DID IT COST?

What did all this technology cost the collector or dealer waiting in line, and how long did it take to print out the stamps?? At "Australia 99" World Stamp Expo March 19-24, collectors were invited to use one of 4 cameras able to deliver this new technology.

Cost was \$10 for each personalized sheet of 10 x 45¢ stamps, along with their own color photo on each attached perforated "tab". There was a maximum 5 sheets supplied per person, i.e. 50 "photo stamps" in total.

The same photo image appeared on each of the 10 stamps - there were no changes of pose possible within each sheet. Collectors or dealers could of course choose to go back in line and strike other poses, or pose alongside a friend or family member - the photos allowed two persons posing together within each "tab".

Australia Post claimed that the photographic image was transferred and printed "in less than one minute". A humorous notation was made in the instructions that were handed to each potential stamp subject, after advising them that they took "no responsibility for any person's personal presentation".

The notation read : "Anyone deliberately making inappropriate gestures during photography will automatically forfeit their order and a refund will not be provided".

Use your imagination as to what MAY have happened, but I did not hear of any photos getting confiscated, so presumably everyone behaved themselves!

There was no mention of whether the infamous "good face for radio" type visages of many of our friends or colleagues would be permitted as sitting subjects, or simply banned on the grounds of good taste!

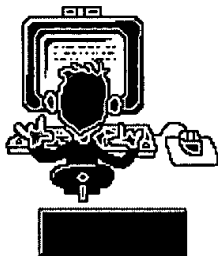
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Above is one of my *Market Man* "Tipster" columns published in the *Australasian STAMPS* Magazine.

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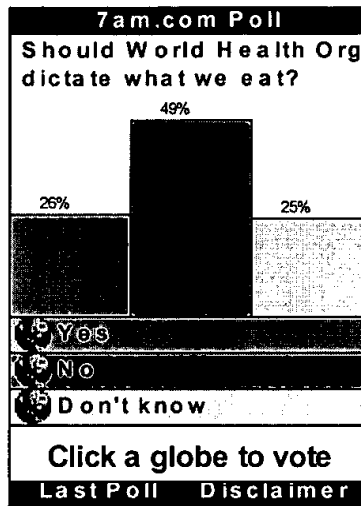
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Below are some selected Market Man "Tipster" style columns published in the "**Australasian STAMPS Magazine**" and "**Stamp News**" Magazines (the more recent ones with colour images.) Many of these, and many other original and general philatelic articles, were also published in "**Linn's Stamp News**" in the USA, the world's largest selling stamp publication - by many light years. I am their Australasian correspondent. Most of the Linn's articles have full colour images of the story subject.

Many of these articles, or separate articles also appeared in the leading trade publication "**Philatelic Exp rter**" in the UK, where I have written regularly for some 20 years, and continue to do so. And my feature articles have appeared in many other leading international publications such as: "**Stamp Collector**" (USA) "**Global Stamp News**" (USA) "**Coin World**" (USA) "**Banknote Reporter**" (USA) "**Coin And Banknote Magazine**", (Australia) "**Stamps**", "**Stamp Magazine**", "**Stamp and Coin Mart**", and "**Gibbons Stamp Monthly**." (all UK) I also have written for numerous foreign language stamp and numismatic and Stamp Society publications as well, and been a consultant and/or contributor to all the major International Stamp Catalogues, such as Stanley Gibbons, Scott, Minkus, Michel, Australian Stamp Catalogue, Renniks, ACSC etc.

For over a decade from 1984 I was also the Stamp Market 'Tipster' columnist and general writer for "**Stamp News**" every issue, and never missed a deadline. I re-commenced that brief in early 2003 after a year or two break from writing to travel the world. Prior to that I was the Market Tipster columnist and general writer for some years for the venerable "**Australian Stamp Monthly**".

I have written regularly on stamps and coins and banknotes and associated fields internationally (plus of course many other totally un-related subjects most especially freelance articles on my other great passion - **TRAVEL!**) **for over 25 years**, and have been Managing Editor, Executive Editor, Managing Director, Board Member - even sole owner and publisher of monthly and well respected internationally circulated glossy colour magazines in these fields until very recently.

Space constraints precludes a longer list of philatelic articles being posted here, as carelessly I did not retain the text for many dozens more smaller pieces when I sold my last computer and wiped the old files. And I never typed the hundreds of pre-1997 articles on computer sadly, so there is no e-copy record of those. NOTE - since **Linn's Stamp News** wiped their on-line access to archived articles in late 2002, I understand this page is the **ONLY** on-line source for those Linn's pieces below which are now saved on my server.

The MAIN subject matter of each column is shown below, **HOWEVER** be mindful that many ASM columns have four or five totally separate individual stories within them. Browse, print-out, and **ENJOY!**

Glen Stephens Online Articles

Printed Worldwide 1996/1999	PNG 1994/1995 "Emergency Overprints": The REAL Story!
ASM March 1998	Aussie Record Price for Cricketing Cover
Linn's March 1998	World Record Price for NZ "Teddy Bears"
ASM April 1998	UK Diana Stamps Printed 5 Days After Car Crash
ASM April 1998	Tonga New Issues About to Cease?
ASM April 1998	PNG Record Price Modern Cover - \$4,750
Linn's June 8, 1998 (front page story)	New Zealand Post Buys Invert for Record \$66,500
Linn's Oct. 26, 1998 (front page story)	Princess Diana's Memory Tarnished by P.O. Profit Grab
Linn's Dec. 7, 1998	Monaco's Prince Rainer in Stamp Scandal?
Linn's Dec. 21, 1998	Signature Stamps Franked Aussie Mail Bombs
ASM Feb. 1999	Seven Seas Stamps Sold Silently
ASM Feb. 1999	Nigerian Scam Letters Continue
Linn's March 8, 1999 (front page story)	New Australian Rarity Found on 1932 Cover Piece
Linn's March 22, 1999 (front page story)	Australia to Issue Personalised Photo Stamps
ASM April 1999	Mug Shot Stamps Debut From Australia Post!
ASM May 1999	"AUSTRALIA 99" World Stamp Expo a Smash
ASM June 1999	Scarcest Ever Aussie Decimal Set Just Issued
ASM July 1999	New Lord Howe Island Stamps in Legal Fiasco
ASM July 1999	Max Stern & Kevin Duffy Receive Australia Medals
Stamp Wholesaler (USA) July 1999	Early Start For Aussie Dealer Simon Dunkerley
ASM Sept. 1999	Stamp Scoop of the Year! Modern Rarities
ASM Oct. 1999	Internet - What A Tangled Web We Weave!
ASM Nov. 1999	\$9,000 Rarity Bought Off Dealer for \$600
ASM Dec. 1999/Jan. 2000	USA's Priciest Stamp + \$17,250 for 1929 Cover
ASM Feb. 2000	Welcome to the New Century - Unique Jan. 1 Covers!
ASM Feb. 2000	Major Pacific Rarity Found in Junk Box!
Linn's Feb. 14, 2000 (front page story)	Uncle Sam Beats Up on Sellers of North Korea!

<u>Linn's June 5, 2000</u> (front page story)	<u>Australian Kangaroo Stamp Sells For \$30,000 - World Record</u>
<u>Linn's August 21, 2000</u> (front page story)	<u>Australia to issue stamps for Aussie gold medalists one day after their wins</u>
<u>Linn's October 2, 2000</u> (front page story)	<u>Australia Gold Medal Stamps being issued already</u>
<u>Linn's October 23, 2000</u> (front page story)	<u>Gold Medal Summer Olympic Stamps A Smash!</u>
<u>Linn's November 27, 2000</u> (front page story)	<u>Australian issues surprise Paralympic Games Stamps</u>
<u>Linn's April 9, 2001</u> (front page story)	<u>Long lost major Australian collection for auction - not seen for half a century.</u>
<u>Linn's June 4, 2001</u> (front page story)	<u>Lt Col. Harrie Evans auction smashes Australian stamp price records.</u>
<u>Linn's March 11, 2002</u> (front page story)	<u>Aussie golds in Winter Games bring more instant stamps.</u>
<u>Linn's May 20, 2002</u> (front page story)	<u>New nation of East Timor to issue stamps May 20.</u>
Stamp News March, 2003	<u>"Market Matters" - I am pleased to be back writing after a few years absence!</u>
Stamp News April, 2003	<u>"Stamp Storage tips" - Rare Australian Olympics sheetlet 17 might be a 'sleeper'?</u>
<u>Linns May 5, 2003</u> (front page story)	<u>2 common Australian stamps sell for \$A217,898</u>
Stamp News May, 2003	<u>Ignore Young Collectors?</u>
Stamp News June, 2003	<u>The next 'boom' era – Pre-Decimal Australian First Day Covers</u>
Stamp News July, 2003	<u>Vandal cancels ... how to avoid them</u>
Stamp News August, 2003	<u>eBay Selling ... A fool and his money are soon parted.</u>
Stamp News September, 2003	<u>Lord Howe Island - "Carried by Sea" storm mail</u>
Stamp News October, 2003	<u>Concorde – the end of an era</u>
Stamp News November, 2003 "Linns" November 10, 2003	<u>Single Australian 1915 KGV "Penny Red" stamp fetches \$48,400 at auction</u>
Stamp News December, 2003	<u>Will I or Won't I ??? Do YOU have a Last Will And Testament?</u>
Stamp News January, 2004	<u>Two new Catalogues released - and a bizarre eBay realisation!</u>

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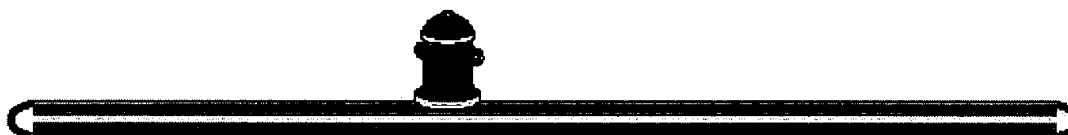
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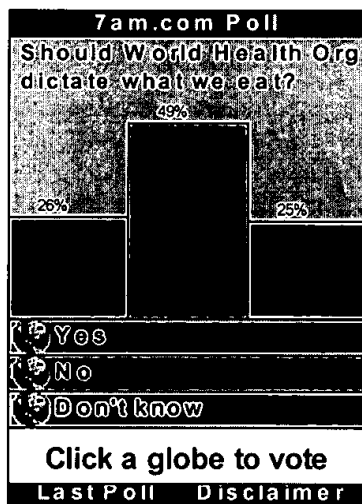
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March 22, 1999. (Front page feature story)

Australia to personalize new stamps with photographs of show visitors

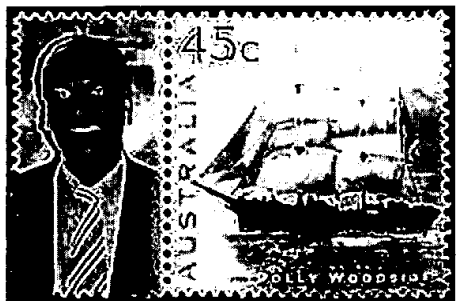
By Glen Stephens

In a world first, Australia Post this month will offer to print a collector's photograph in color on a postally v stamp unit.

The leading-edge technology was to debut March 19 at the Australia 99 world stamp expo in Melbourne Australia.

Show visitors will be able to buy blocks of 10 Australian domestic-let rate 45¢ Polly Woodside stamps with their photograph printed beside, se-tenant with, the stamps.

The *Polly Woodside* is a full-size, historic square-rigged ship moored permanently on the Yarra River outside the Melbourne Exhibition Cer



David Maiden, head of Australia Post philatelic division, featured on his own personalized stamp. Visitors to the Australia 99 stamp show will be able to have their similar photographs appear on labels that are set-tenant to the 45¢ stamp showing the ship *Polly Woodside*.

where Australia 99 takes place March 19-24.

The regular-issue 45¢ Polly Woodside stamps have a perforated, gummed, vertical tab, or small label picturing the Australia 99 koala logo, to the side of the design.

Special sheets of 10 of these stamps have been printed with this perforated tab totally blank, instead of picturing the logo.

A secret trial campaign spanning several months allowed color photo images of a person or persons to be rapidly printed upon this blank stamplike tab.

For this issue, Australia Post waived the usual rule that only official standard design postage stamps are postally valid in Australia.

For example, Australia Post normally will not handcancel a nonpostal label, charity seal or stamplike cinderella because it is against regulations.

These personalized tabs are confirmed as 100 percent postally valid while still attached to the 45¢ *Polly Woodside* stamps and may be postmarked with the special exhibition postmark or even passed through the regular mails.

This may put a whole new meaning to the term "socked-on-the-nose" cancels.

The unit, with the stamp and personalized tab, can be used on registered, insured or overseas mail. However, the photo labels must at all times remain affixed to the 45¢ stamp to be postally valid.

The photograph attached to the Polly Woodside stamp shown here in color is of David Maiden, national manager of Australia Post philatelic division.

I asked Maiden whether he can envisage these items being offered by mail-order after the show, perhaps with collectors sending in color photographs for scanning.

He replied: "We have no firm position on that right now. We will see what kind of response we get at Australia 99 and take that as a pointer to whether we proceed any further with this novel concept."

Visitors to Australia 99 will be able to buy their personalized stamps for \$A10 (\$6) for a sheet of 10 45¢ stamps.

There will be a maximum five sheets supplied per person, that is 50 photo images in total.

The photos allow two persons posing together within each tab.

Australia Post claims that the photographic image will be transferred and printed "in less than one minute."

A humorous notation is made in the instructions that are handed to each potential subject.

The notation reads: "Anyone deliberately making inappropriate gestures during photography will automatically forfeit their order and a refund will not be provided."

For the technically minded, here is how state-of-the-art modern technology has made these unusual stamp

items possible.

A person stands in front of one of six digital cameras on site at Australia 99 to have his photograph taken.

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After manipulation, the image is printed digitally in sharp full color by a Fuji Xerox Docucolor model 40/40.

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Extensive trials of this exciting process were conducted in recent months by Australia Post-owned Sprintpak and by Excel Digital, a design reproduction company located in Melbourne.

Glen Stephens, a stamp dealer and stamp journalist based in Sydney, Australia, is a regular Linn's contributor.

This is an edited version of a *Linn's* article that appeared in the March 22, 1999, issue of *Linn's Stamp News*. For the complete story, subscribe to Linn's Stamp News.

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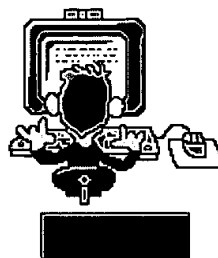
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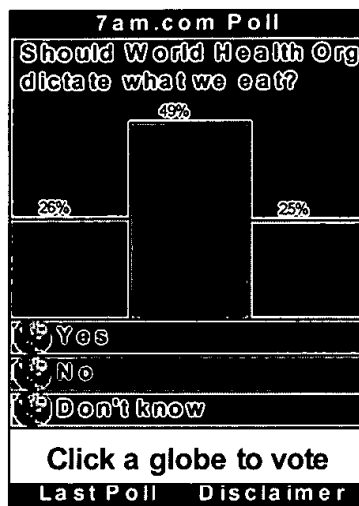


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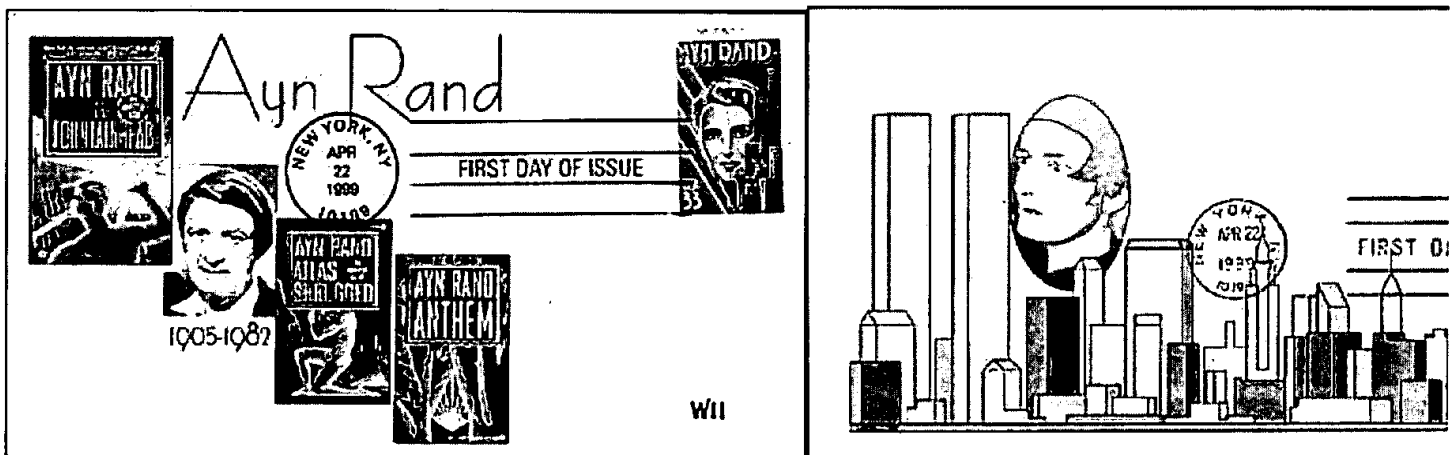
AYN RAND THE STAMP COLLECTOR



Dedicated to Greg Balkan,
a Swiss Objectivist, †1999.

On the 22nd of April, 1999, the United States Postal Service has issued a stamp dedicated to the philosopher and novelist Ayn Rand, the author of *Atlas Shrugged*, philosophically the most challenging bestseller of its time. Her first novel, *We the Living*, was published in 1936. With the publication of *The Fountainhead* in 1943, she achieved a spectacular and enduring success. Miss Rand's unique philosophy, Objectivism, has gained a worldwide audience.

The fundamentals of her philosophy are set forth in four nonfiction books: *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, *For the New Intellectual*, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, and *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*. The work: *The Romantic Manifesto*, is the magnificent statement of her artistic credo.



It is less known that Ayn Rand was a passionate stamps collector. Please find below some excerpt from her article *Why I Like Stamp Collecting*, originally appeared in the *Minkus Stamp Journal* in 1971. The text, published below, is taken from the book *The Ayn Rand Column*, Second Renaissance Books, ISBN 1-56114-099-6.

"I started collecting stamps when I was ten years old, but had to give up by the time I was twelve. In all the time since, I never thought of resuming the hobby. It left only one after-effect: I was unable to throw away an interesting looking stamp. So, I kept saving odd stamps, all these years; I put them into random envelopes and never looked at them again.



Then, about a year-and-a-half ago, I met a bright little girl named Tammy, who asked me-somewhat timidly, but very resolutely-whether I received letters from foreign countries and, if I did, would I give her the stamps. I promised to send her my duplicates...

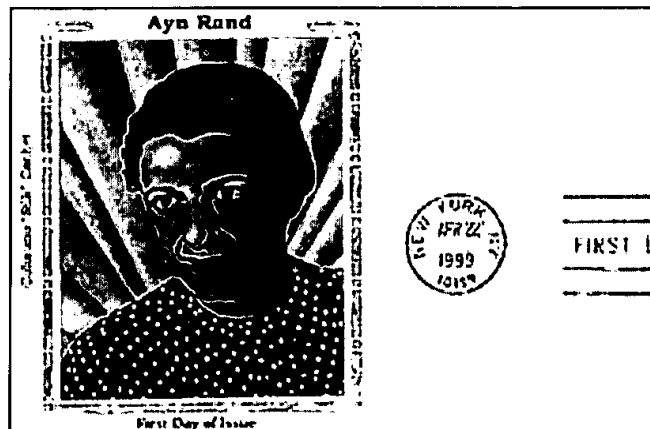
Once I started sorting out the stamps I had accumulated, I was hooked. It was an astonishing experience to find my enthusiasm returning after more than fifty years, as if there has been no interruption. Only now the feeling had the eagerness of childhood combined with the full awareness, confidence and freedom of age... No, I have not forgotten Tammy: I send her piles of duplicates every few months, and I feel very grateful to her.

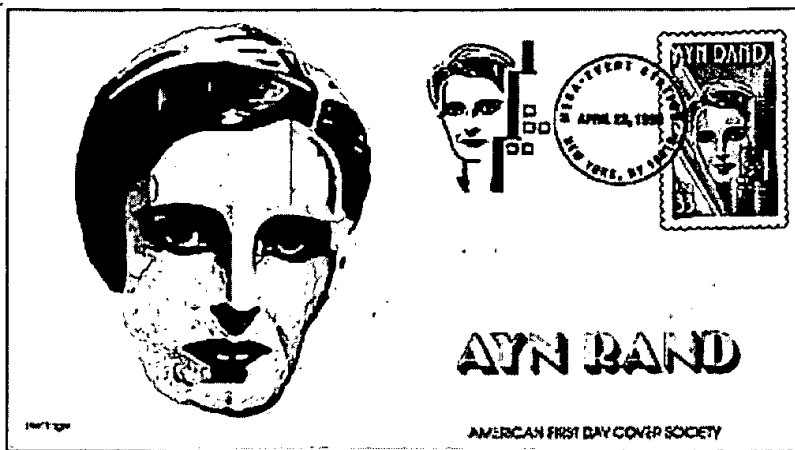
In all those years I had never found a remedy for mental fatigue. Now, if I feel tired after a whole day of writing, I spend an hour with my stamps albums and it makes me able to resume my writing for the rest of the evening. A stamp album is a miraculous brain-restorer.



I am often asked why people like stamp collecting. So widespread a hobby can obviously have many different motives. I can answer only in regard to my own motives, which I have observed also in some of the stamps collectors I have met.

The pleasure lies in a certain special way of using one's mind. Stamp collecting is a hobby for busy, purposeful, ambitious people - because, in patterns, it has the essential elements of a career, but transposed to a clearly delimited, intensely private world...





A career requires the ability to sustain a purpose over a long period of time, through many separate steps, choices, decisions, adding up to a steady progression to a goal... Purposeful people cannot rest by doing nothing... They seldom find pleasure in single occasions, such as a party or a show or even a vacation, a pleasure that ends right then and there, with no further consequences.

The minds of such people require continuity, integration, a sense of moving forward. They are accustomed to working long-range... Yet they need relaxation and rest from their constant, single tracked drive. What they need is another track, but for the same train - that is, a change of subject, but using part of the same method of mental functioning. Stamp collecting fulfills that need..

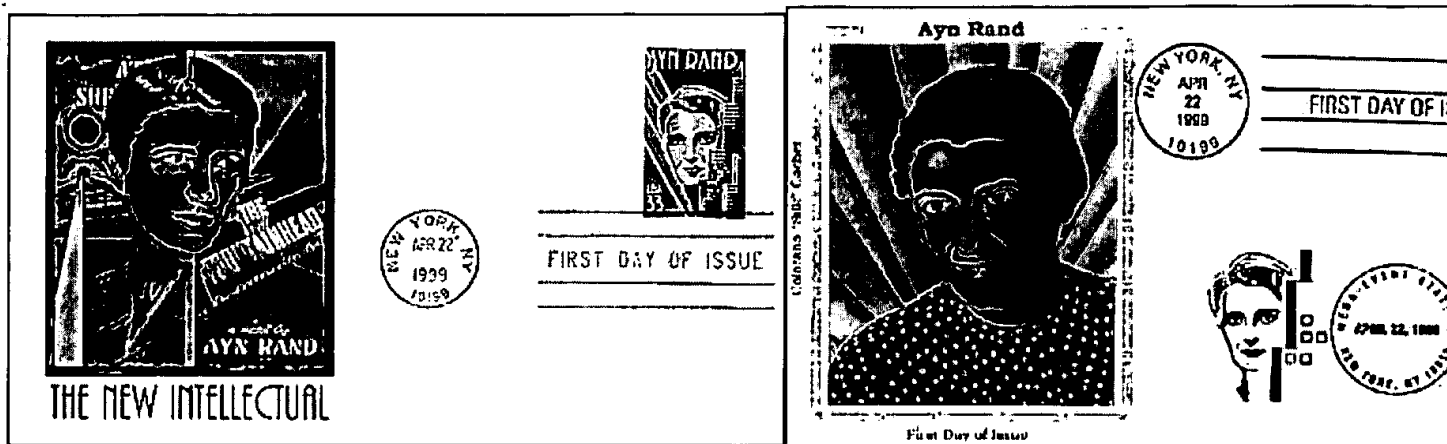
The course of a career depends on one's own action predominantly, but not exclusively. A career requires a struggle; it involves tensions, disappointments, obstacles which are challenging, at times, but are often ugly, painful, senseless - particularly, in an age like the present, when one has to fight too frequently against the dishonesty, the evasion, the irrationality of the people one deals with.

In stamp collecting, one experiences the rare pleasure of independent action without irrelevant burdens or impositions. Nobody can interfere with one's collection, nobody need to be considered or questioned or worried about. The choices, the work, the responsibility - and the enjoyment - are one's own. So is the great sense of freedom and privacy. For this very reason, when one deals with people as a stamp collector, it is on a cheerful, benevolent basis.

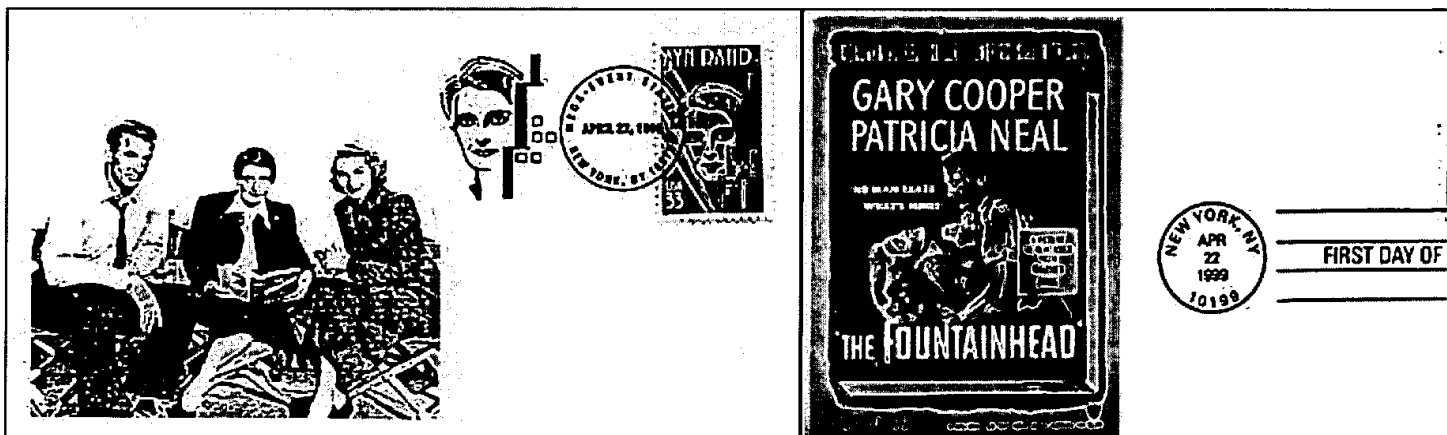


People cannot interfere, but they can be very helpful and generous. There is a sense of "brotherhood" among stamp collectors, of a kind that is very unusual today: the brotherhood of holding the same values...

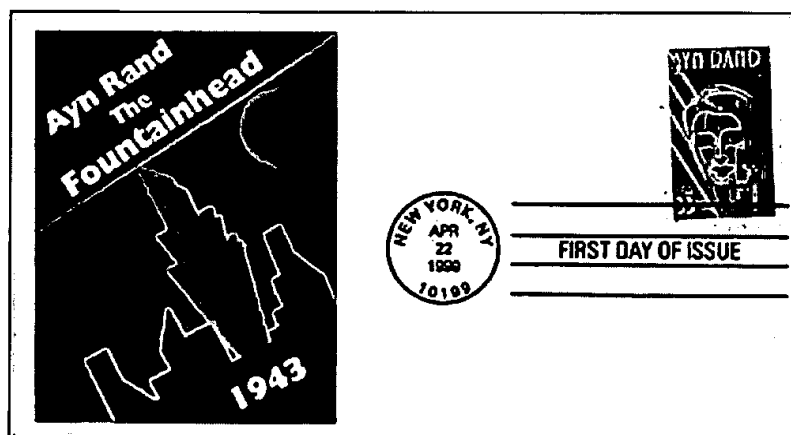
The pursuit of the unique, the unusual, the different, the rare is the motive power of stamp collecting. It endows the hobby with the suspense and excitement of a treasure hunt - even on the more modest level of collecting, where the treasure may be simply an unexpected gift from a friend, which fills the one blank spot, completing a set...



There is a constant change in the world of stamps, and constant motion, and a brilliant flow of color, and a spectacular display of human imagination... Speaking esthetically, I should like to mention the enormous amount of talent displayed on stamps - more than one can find in today's art galleries. Ignoring the mug shots of some of the world's ugliest faces (a sin of which the stamps of most countries are guilty), one finds real masterpieces of the art of painting..."



Background: School of Athens, by Raphael. This Souvenir Sheet was issued in 1983 by Sierra Leone, Scott # 580. Aristotle (in the center, on the right) points with his right hand toward the earth; Plato, on his right, points with his hand toward heavens.



First Day Covers: Many of them courtesy of Mrs. Helen Fowler, USA, PASIC member. *The sheet of Ayn Rand stamps:* Posthumous courtesy of Gregory Balkan, Switzerland.

Link: [Ayn Rand Institute](http://www.aynrandinstitute.com)

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